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Daniel Leibholz

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EXAMINER

HUISMAN, DAVID J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2183

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/17/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/747,583	Applicant(s) LEIBHOLZ ET AL.	
	Examiner DAVID J. HUISMAN	Art Unit 2183	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 September 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 16-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 16-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 April 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 2183

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-13 and 16-19 have been examined.

Papers Submitted

2. It is hereby acknowledged that the following papers have been received and placed of record in the file: Power of Attorney and Assignee Showing Ownership as received on 9/22/2008, and Amendment as received on 9/25/2008.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 1-13 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lin U.S. Patent Number 6,631,452 (as applied in the previous Office Action).

5. Referring to claim 1, Lin has taught a microprocessor, comprising:

a) registers for holding values, wherein said registers are logically partitioned into register windows. See Fig.2, Fig.4, and column 4, lines 1-29, and note that the frames are the register windows.

b) a storage for storing values held in the registers of the register windows. See Fig.2, Fig.4, and column 4, lines 1-29, and note the backing store.

Art Unit: 2183

c) a detector for detecting that a register window overflow condition or a register window underflow condition is imminent, by determining if execution of any cached instructions that are next slated for insertion into an execution pipeline will result in a register window overflow condition or a register underflow condition, and an instruction generator responsive to the detector for generating at least one instruction to manipulate the storage to avoid a trap by performing, in response to the determination, at least one of a register window spill operation or a register window fill operation responsive to the condition that is detected as imminent. See column 2, line 47, to column 3, line 5, column 3, lines 59-67, and column 5, lines 26-41, and note that speculative spills/fills are performed when bandwidth is available. The speculative spills/fills are performed because the system anticipates that overflow/underflow is imminent due to cached instructions (Fig.1, component 130) of inactive procedures that, when fetched for execution, will require more storage than is available to a procedure or due an instruction that, when fetched, will access data that is no longer in the register file assigned to a procedure. See column 5, lines 26-41. The successful performance of speculative spills/fills eliminates the need for performing mandatory spills/fills (traps). See column 5, line 42, to column 6, line 2. In the case when a speculative spill/fill is successful, the mandatory spill/fill would be unnecessary as the speculative spill/fill has already completed the task to be performed by the mandatory spill/fill. This prevents the stall associated with the mandatory spill/fill from being incurred. When a speculative spill/fill is successful, then the associated mandatory spill/fill is avoided. This is clearly Lin's intention as the purpose of Lin's system is to reduce stalls associated with mandatory spills/fills.

Art Unit: 2183

6. Referring to claim 2, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the detector and the instruction generator are implemented in hardware. See column 11, lines 1-15.

7. Referring to claim 3, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the microprocessor further comprises a cache for caching instructions (Fig.1, component 130) for introduction into an execution stage and wherein the detector examines the instructions in the cache to determine if a register window overflow condition is imminent by determining if execution of any of the fetched instructions will result in a register window overflow condition. It should be realized that by executing fetched instructions of the active procedure (from a cache), the system is detecting that an overflow is imminent, i.e., that the active procedure may need more registers. Therefore, speculative spills will be issued. The instructions in the cache are the same instructions that are to be executed. No matter what point the instructions are monitored, they are “the instructions in the cache”. That is, applicant is not claiming that the instructions are monitored while in the cache and before being fetched from the cache for decoding, execution, etc. Applicant merely claims monitoring instructions in the cache and an instruction that is being executed is also an instruction in the cache as that is where it was fetched from.

8. Referring to claim 4, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 3. Lin has further taught that the detector looks for an instruction in the cache that stores contents of a register window in the registers when the registers have no available space for storing the contents (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract, figure 6, column 8 line 49-column 9 line 5).

Art Unit: 2183

9. Referring to claim 5, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 3. Lin has further taught that the detector examines how much storage space is available in the registers (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract, figure 6, column 8 line 49-column 9 line 5).

10. Referring to claim 6, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the microprocessor further comprises a cache for caching instructions for introduction into an execution stage and wherein the detector examines the instructions in the cache to determine if a register window underflow condition is imminent by determining if execution of the instructions will result in a register window underflow condition. It should be realized that by executing fetched instructions of the active procedure (from a cache), the system is detecting that an underflow is imminent, i.e. that an inactive procedure will be returned to (and not have the required data available). Therefore, speculative fills will be issued to speculatively load that data. The instructions in the cache are the same instructions that are to be executed. No matter what point the instructions are monitored, they are “the instructions in the cache”. That is, applicant is not claiming that the instructions are monitored while in the cache and before being fetched from the cache for decoding, execution, etc. Applicant merely claims monitoring instructions in the cache and an instruction that is being executed is also an instruction in the cache as that is where it was fetched from.

11. Referring to claim 7, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 6. Lin has further taught that the detector looks for an instruction in the cache that restores a register window when contents of the register window are stored on the stack rather than in the registers

Art Unit: 2183

(Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract, figure 6, column 8 line 49-column 9 line 5).

12. Referring to claim 8, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the detector detects solely whether a register window underflow condition is imminent (Lin column 11 lines 40-43).

13. Referring to claim 9, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the detector detects solely whether a register window overflow condition is imminent (Lin column 11 lines 35-39).

14. Referring to claim 10, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the detector detects both whether a register window overflow condition is imminent and whether a register window underflow condition is imminent. It should be noted that spills and fills are performed in response to detecting overflows and underflows, respectively.

15. Referring to claim 11, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the microprocessor further comprises an execution unit for executing the instruction generated by the instruction generator (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract, figure 4).

16. Referring to claim 12, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the microprocessor performs out of order execution of instructions (Lin column 3 lines 32-45; speculative processing by definition is not a certain operation, but is a prediction based on some information, and because of a misprediction, the wrong order of operations will occur).

Art Unit: 2183

17. Referring to claim 13, Lin has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Lin has further taught that the instruction generator includes a second storage for holding the at least one instruction that is generated by the instruction generator (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract; it is inherent that some ROM or other memory would be available to hold the speculative operations, that the RSE chooses to executes).

18. Referring to claim 16, Lin has taught a microprocessor having a plurality of registers logically partitioned into register windows and a storage for storing contents of register windows, a method, comprising the steps of:

a) determining that a register window overflow condition or a register window underflow condition is imminent by performing a logic operation on a value representative of a state of a register and a value representative of an instruction held in cache and determining if execution of any cached instructions that are next slated for insertion into an execution pipeline will result in a register window overflow condition or a register window underflow condition, and in response to determining that the register overflow condition or the register window underflow condition is imminent, manipulating the storage to avoid a trap by performing at least one of a register window spill operation or a register window fill operation responsive to the condition determined as imminent.. See column 2, line 47, to column 3, line 5, column 3, lines 59-67, and column 5, lines 26-41, and note that speculative spills/fills are performed when bandwidth is available. The speculative spills/fills are performed because the system anticipates that overflow/underflow is imminent due to cached instructions (Fig.1, component 130) of inactive procedures that, when fetched for execution, will require more storage than is available to a procedure or due an instruction that, when fetched, will access data that is no longer in the register file assigned to a

Art Unit: 2183

procedure. See column 5, lines 26-41. The successful performance of speculative spills/fills eliminates the need for performing mandatory spills/fills (traps). See column 5, line 42, to column 6, line 2. In the case when a speculative spill/fill is successful, the mandatory spill/fill would be unnecessary as the speculative spill/fill has already completed the task to be performed by the mandatory spill/fill. This prevents the stall associated with the mandatory spill/fill from being incurred. When a speculative spill/fill is successful, then the associated mandatory spill/fill is avoided. This is clearly Lin's intention as the purpose of Lin's system is to reduce stalls associated with mandatory spills/fills. Also, see column 6, lines 16-23, and Table 2 in column 8. The value representative of a state of a register would be the RSE.StoreReg, which holds the next dirty register to be spilled. And, the value representative of a fetched instruction would be the RSC.mode value. This value indicates, for the instruction, whether or not speculative mode is used. A logic operation is performed on these values. The logic operation is a compare of the type "if a dirty register exists in RSE.StoreReg, and speculative mode is enabled, then perform a speculative spill when possible." As long as there is a value in StoreReg which should be spilled, then overflow is imminent. That is, data may need to use this register when a new procedure is switched in, but the register cannot be used until it is spilled. So, the presence of a dirty register and the fact that instructions from procedures are to be fetched and executed indicates that underflow/overflow is imminent.

19. Referring to claim 17, Lin has taught a method as described in claim 16. Lin has further taught that when it determined that a register window overflow condition is imminent, the step of manipulating the storage comprises providing at least one instruction for execution by the

Art Unit: 2183

microprocessor that causes the contents in at least the selected register window to be stored in the storage (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract).

20. Referring to claim 18, Lin has taught a method as described in claim 16. Lin has further taught that when it is determined that a register window underflow condition is imminent, the step of manipulating the storage comprises providing at least one instruction for execution by the microprocessor that causes data in the storage to be stored in the registers (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract).

21. Referring to claim 19, Lin has taught a method as described in claim 16. Lin has further taught that the microprocessor has an instruction stream slated for execution and wherein the instruction that causes the contents in at least the selected register window to be stored in the storage is inserted into the instruction stream (Lin column 7 line 45-column 8 line 15, column 5 line 46-column 6 line 2, abstract, figure 4; the instruction stream is the operations in figure 4 that spill and fill the registers from memory).

22. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

23. Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Eickemeyer et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,377,336 (herein referred to as Eickemeyer).

24. Referring to claim 1, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor, comprising:

Art Unit: 2183

a) registers for holding values, wherein said registers are logically partitioned into register windows. See Fig.2, and note the register file. A register file has multiple registers that are logically partitioned (separate logic for R1, R2, etc.). And, each register is a window of 1 register.

b) a storage for storing values held in the registers of the register windows. See Fig.2, component 104.

c) a detector for detecting that a register window overflow condition or a register window underflow condition is imminent, by determining if execution of any cached instructions that are next slated for insertion into an execution pipeline will result in a register window overflow condition or a register underflow condition, and an instruction generator responsive to the detector for generating at least one instruction to manipulate the storage to avoid a trap by performing, in response to the determination, at least one of a register window spill operation or a register window fill operation responsive to the condition that is detected as imminent. See column 3, lines 30-47, and claim 1. Note the system scans for load instructions (which are not only buffered, but also cached - Fig.1, component 103) prior to their execution, where loads require an access to storage to manage register window information. When a load is detected, the system determines that execution of the fetched load will result in register window underflow, which in Eickemeyer would be when the data to be loaded into the register is not in the cache (and so, the system would have to perform a load from main memory (trap)). Also, see the abstract, column 3, lines 30-47, and claim 1. Note that in response to detecting the load, a prefetch instruction is generated in order to instruct the system to perform a prefetch operation.

Art Unit: 2183

As a result, the system prefetches data which is ultimately written to a register. Hence, a prefetch is an operation associated with filling registers, i.e., it is a register fill operation.

25. Referring to claim 2, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Eickemeyer has further taught that the detector and the instruction generator are implemented in hardware. See Fig.1 and Fig.2.

26. Referring to claim 6, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Eickemeyer has further taught that the microprocessor further comprises a cache for caching instructions for introduction into an execution stage and wherein the detector examines the instructions in the cache to determine if a register window underflow condition is imminent by determining if execution of the instructions will result in a register window underflow condition. See column 3, lines 30-47, and claim 1. Note the system scans for load instructions prior to their execution, where loads require an access to storage to manage register window information. Note that the buffer of Eickemeyer is essentially a cache by definition. A cache, as is known, is a memory for holding recently accessed data items. In Eickemeyer, instructions are fetched into the buffer, so the buffer is holding recently accessed data items, and is therefore acting as a cache. When a load is detected, the system determines that execution of the fetched load will result in register window underflow, which in Eickemeyer would be when the data to be loaded into the register is not in the cache (and so, the system would have to perform a load from main memory).

27. Referring to claim 8, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Eickemeyer has further taught that the detector detects solely whether a register window underflow condition is imminent for reasons described above.

Art Unit: 2183

28. Referring to claim 11, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Eickemeyer has further taught that the microprocessor further comprises an execution unit for executing the instruction generated by the instruction generator. There must inherently be logic which executes a command.

29. Referring to claim 12, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Eickemeyer has further taught that the microprocessor performs out of order execution of instructions. See column 11, lines 25-29.

30. Referring to claim 13, Eickemeyer has taught a microprocessor as described in claim 1. Eickemeyer has further taught that the instruction generator includes a second storage for holding the at least one instruction that is generated by the instruction generator. See Fig.2, component 210.

Response to Arguments

31. Applicant's arguments filed on September 25, 2008, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejections above for reasons why Lin and Eickemeyer still anticipate the claims. Specifically, both references cache instructions, and both detect that overflow/underflow is imminent based on cached instructions that are likely to cause overflow/underflow. That is, Lin determines that inactive procedures (which comprise instructions that are cached) will cause overflow/underflow, and Eickemeyer determines that loads in a load buffer (and also cached) will cause overflow/underflow.

32. Furthermore, it should be noted that applicant's amendment to claim 16 removing the "unconditionally" language results in Lin reading on that claim.

Conclusion

33. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

34. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Applicant is reminded that in amending in response to a rejection of claims, the patentable novelty must be clearly shown in view of the state of the art disclosed by the references cited and the objections made. Applicant must also show how the amendments avoid such references and objections. See 37 CFR § 1.111(c).

Ando et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,233,691, has taught a register window system for reducing the need for overflow-write by prewriting registers to memory during times without bus contention.

Art Unit: 2183

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DAVID J. HUISMAN whose telephone number is (571)272-4168. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (8:00-4:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie Chan can be reached on (571) 272-4162. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/David J. Huisman/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2183
November 16, 2008